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WAYSIDE POEMS

BY FLORENCE McCURDY

1. Poetry, American.

With the Compliments
of Thos. G. Gourley.

Phila.,
Jan. 25, 1903.

N.B.!
Mc

Wayside Poems

By FLORENCE McCURDY

Collected and Arranged by
Her Sister

PHILADELPHIA:
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1901

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FLORRIE:

"And while in life's late afternoon,
Where cool and long the shadows grow
I walk to meet the night that soon
Shall shape and shadow overflow,
I cannot feel that thou art far,
Since near at need the angels are;
And when the sunset gates unbar,
Shall I not see thee waiting stand,
And, white against the evening star,
The welcome of thy beckoning hand?"

—ELLEN.

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Wayside Poems

GETTYSBURG.

[Dedicated to the Ninetieth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers.]

'TWAS on this site, at Gettysburg,
In eighteen hundred sixty-three,
The Ninetieth Pennsylvania fought,
Our land from bitter feud to free.
Three hundred stalwart sons and brave,
In battle's armor all complete,
From many hard-won fields had come,
And in one common cause to meet.
'Mid clanging sounds of hoof and steel,
And cannon rattling loud and clear,
They came, those valiant heroes came,
And set their standard colors here.

The day was sultry, hot and clear,
And gorgeous shone the July sun,
Its splendor flashing far and near,
From rifle, musket, sword and gun.
A deep and solemn stillness reigned,
The drowsy vales and hills along;
The insect choirs no longer chirped,
Nor trilled their lays the birds of song;
For two opposing armies stood
In battle's dread and grim array,
One clad in uniform of blue,
The other in Confed'rate gray.

Gettysburg.

At length came forth the stern command,
  And forward moved their bold brigade,
With steady pulse, undaunted mien,
  And hearts by terror undismayed;
Unmindful of the battle's din,
  And sabre-clash and tramp of steeds,
Those manly boys made sacrifice
  Of noble lives in gallant deeds.
For three long hours they held their post,
  That "Post of Honor" bravely won,
Tho' comrades dying lay, and dead,
  And ranks were thinning one by one.

Foot-sore and weary, famished, faint,
  Those dauntless soldiers then withdrew;
But O, it was a ghastly sight,
  That battlefield disclosed to view!
The tide that coursed those sun-kissed hills,
  In rivulets of deepest dye,
And poured its flood o'er mead and fen,
  Outvied the crimson of the sky.
And yet it was a glorious charge,
  Those gallant soldiers that day made,
A charge that shall on record live,
  Though with a ransom dearly paid.

And here again, at Gettysburg,
  The brave survivors meet once more,
While fervent hearts and thrilling tongues
  Rehearse the story of the war.

Gettysburg.

Near by this hallowed battle-ground,
  Full many a moss-grown grave is seen—
Where fallen heroes peaceful rest,
  Tho' long, sad years have rolled between.
O careless stranger, as you pass
  Yon sacred spot, with rev'rence tread,
For sleepeth there no craven soul,
  In that lone "City of the Dead."

RECOMPENSE.

I SORROWED that the spring's fresh, balmy days had fled,
And that proud orchards had their snowy blossoms shed;
But whilst I grieved, behold! June blushed with roses red,
And summer reigned instead.

I sighed because too soon the warm, bright summer went,
And all her wealth and joy, alas! were quickly spent;
But in the midst of my chagrin and discontent
Ripe autumn days were sent.

I mourned because all things on earth must have an end,
And friendships be dissolved which Heaven did surely send;
But whilst I wept the loss, and could not comprehend,
God came to me a Friend.

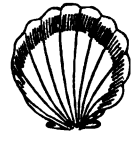
And thus I learned the happy, precious truth aright,
That as old pleasures, joys and friendships fade from sight,
Some greater bliss shall crown our lives with sweet delight
In fairer realms of light.

MISSING.

YOU laid your bosom bare to me,
And claimed my love and sympathy;
But oh! I could not understand
Why ling'ringly you held my hand.

Your love-lit eyes like angels' shone,
And stirred the flame within my own;
And day by day brought peace and joy,
And pleasures free from sin's alloy.

But now I long and mourn for you,
For you, to me, were kind and true;
And in the silence of my pain,
Yearn for your love and smiles again.



ON THE BEACH.

THE tide rolls in on the sandy beach,
And the tide rolls out beyond our reach,
While the deep blue waters gleam afar,
Across the surges beyond the bar;
Sometimes they're merry and dance with glee,
And sparkle bright in the sunshine free;
And oft they rage with a mad delight,
Chasing each other like fiends in flight,
Till tossing, foaming, the breakers roar,
And wildly and fiercely lash the shore,
But the lighthouse tower bravely stands
And sweeps the desolate, barren sands,
And clinging fast to the strong gray rocks,
Their thunderous fury grimly mocks.
Our lives are like the turbulent sea,
Girt solemnly round with mystery;
And about us e'er deep currents flow,
Now swift and wild, now gentle and slow.
God grant that the Beacon-light Divine
May across our pathway sweetly shine,
And that we, too, like those strong gray rocks,
Unmindful of storm or tempest shocks,
May fearlessly grasp what each day brings,
And take fast hold of eternal things.

A CHRISTMAS POEM.

LIST, children dear, and you shall hear
A simple story, true and clear,
How long, long centuries ago,
When woods and hills were white with snow,
A little babe was lowly born
This selfsame joyous Christmas morn;

How, guided by a glitt'ring star,
The wise men followed from afar
With frankincense and spices sweet
And laid their off'rings at His feet,
The feet of Him—the stranger child,
Immortal Son of Mary mild.

In strength and years the Infant grew,
Well versed in doctrines old and new,
While ancient prophets taught Him lore,
From out their great and goodly store,
And questions brought Him to expound,
Amazed at wisdom so profound.

This wondrous child, who all hearts won,
Was God's begotten, only Son,
The Saviour, Christ, the One in Three,
Who suffered on sweet Calvary
That we of sins might be forgiv'n,
And dwell with Him who reigns in heav'n.

A Christmas Poem.

And this is why on Christmas Day,
With holly wreaths, fresh garlands gay,
And songs of gladness, joy and mirth,
We celebrate the Saviour's birth;
For peace He brought to all mankind,
As those that seek Him surely find.

And now, with glad hosannas, free,
We'll carol 'neath our Christmas tree,
With choicest gifts for one and all,
The rich and poor, the great and small;
For Christ thus welcomes to His feast
The greatest to the very least.

THE LETTER.

O TARRY not, postman, I prithee. To me
Bring quickly a message from over the sea.
O bring me the letter my true love will write,
For sad is my soul and so weary to-night!
It will tell of a heart both hopeful and strong,
And a love that will last thro' all my life long.
It dare not bring tidings of sorrow or woe,
For it cometh from one whose dear heart I know.
Come hither, good postman! Oh, haste thee, I pray,
And bring me the message I long for to-day!

O, listen, he's coming, his footstep is near.
Now hush, my wild pulse, all your throbbing and fear!
His long-looked-for letter I'll open with joy,
And read the fond words of my brave sailor boy;
The sweet, loving message, so faithful and true,
He's sent o'er the seas for his "dear bonny Sue."
What's this? O my heart, he is dead, he is dead!
No wonder my soul was nigh fainting with dread!
Sure, my sore heart will break with grief, for—ah, me!
They've buried my lad in the depths of the sea.

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

RING out the bells of Heaven
With merry, joyful sound:
Proclaim the wondrous story,
And let it echo round—
The Christ-Child, King of Glory,
In lonely manger born,
To sons of men was given
This holy Christmas morn.

Bring garlands bright of holly,
Entwine the mistletoe,
And vie with wreaths of crimson
The morning's early glow;
Let childish voices carol
Their anthems clear and sweet,
And in their loud hosannas
The story old repeat.

Yes, ring the bells for Christmas
With gladly solemn peal,
And let both great and humble
Their magic power feel:
O'er mountain-top and valley
Resound it once again—
The Christ—the King of Glory—
Was born on Bethle'm's plain.

MARGERY.

I KNOW a maiden fair to see,
Who can both shy and saucy be;
Who fondly rides upon my knee,
My airy, fairy Margery.

This elfin sprite of summers three
Is full of pranks and witchery;
And sweet her laugh and silvery,
My pet's the weesome Margery.

She romps with me in childish glee,
And rules my heart right royally;
Oh! she is all the world to me,
My bonny, winsome Margery.

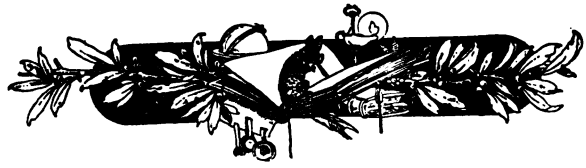
WAYSIDE POEMS.

THROUGH the rocky mountain crevice
Peep the tiny woodland flowers,
Breathing incense pure, refreshing,
Sun-distilled from dew and showers.

Careless feet may tread them under,
Pass them all unheeded by,
But their wild and laughing beauty
Sure will captivate some eye.

E'en a weed may have its mission,
Telling of a love that springs
From a higher, nobler nature,
Reaching down to common things.

May the soul, whose ardent nature
Heav'nward springs through joy and ill,
Treasure up these wayside poems,
And the lessons they instill.



THE MYSTERY OF DEATH.

WHAT means it all—this sleep so deep and still;
The folded hands; the cheek so pale and chill;
The eyes that ne'er will smile on us again;
The willing feet past earthly toil and pain;
The sweet, low voice that hearkens not our call;
This strange, calm peace, that settles over all?

We cannot fathom it; we only know
That, with our loved, we mortals dare not go;
That to this strange and hidden mystery
There's One alone who holds the golden key;
And while our bitter tears flow softly down,
There's rest for them, and an immortal crown.

Yet, O how sweet must be the after-life,
When past their suff'ring, weariness and strife!
While we await the faint expiring breath,
Alone they learn the mystery of death;
And we who tarry here cannot but see
That Death and Life hold each a mystery.

TRIFLES.

ONLY a smile at meeting,
And a pressure of the hand;
Only a few words spoken,
And some letters traced in sand.

Only a bunch of daisies,
Gathered by the wayside brook;
Only a simple token,
And a fond, endearing look.

Only a walk through woodlands,
And four feet a-keeping pace;
Only the tell-tale blushes
Of love in a maiden's face.

Only two souls standing
Where the twilight shadows lie
Down in the sweet, dank meadow,
And a lingering, last good-bye.

These are the little trifles
That make up the sum of life;
These are the bright oases
That lure us from care and strife.

Trifles! ah, yes! And often
'Tis trifles that make the great
In ev'ry joy or sorrow,
Tho' cometh it soon or late.

MEMORIES.

WHEN twilight's hush is drawing nigh
And thwart the blue the shadows lie,
Fond mem'ries cluster thick and fast
Around the dear old buried past:
'Tis then I dream of rosy hours,
Faith, hope and love in wooded bowers,
And merry voices low and sweet,
And converse fraught with joy complete.

Still brighter visions round me cling,
When song-birds brown are carolling,
How that we pledged our hearts' pure vows
Beneath the apple's crimson boughs,
And strolled the woodlands through and through
For clovers red and vi'lets blue,
And smiling, laughing lily-bells,
The pride of moss-entangled dells.

Those vanished years they come and go,
Like spectres gliding to and fro,
Across my weary, songless path
That lies along life's aftermath:
But soon, beyond the sun-kissed hills,
When freed from earthly cares and ills,
I'll meet the loved and brave of yore,
And yearn the perfect past no more.

AUTUMN.

A LITTLE while and all this earth,
So richly garbed in green,
Will be of joy bereft and mirth,
And not a flower be seen.

The fields adrift with golden-rod,
That so delights the eye,
And silkweed drooping in the pod,
Will greet us soon good-bye.

The birds are leaving for the South,
To seek a warmer sun;
The meadow lands are parched with drouth,
The summer days are done.

And yet these mellow autumn days,
And fields of ripened grain,
The changing leaf and golden maize,
Teach us a lesson plain.

We, too, alas! must pass away,
And die as Nature dies;
But there shall dawn a brighter day
For us beyond the skies.

APRIL.

THROUGH green, leafy trees
The light-hearted breeze
Hums a lullaby sweet and low,
And down in the dell,
Where the birch buds swell,
Leaps the brook in its wild, mad flow.

From wee little throats
Come tremulous notes,
Proclaiming, in tuneful refrain—
"Sweet April is here,
Its laughter and cheer,
And blossoms and sunshine and rain."

SHADOWS.

ALONE I stand in the shadow,
And gaze on the distant hills,
Till the changing, dark'ning landscape,
My soul with a shudder fills.
I dream of the unknown future,
The friends who were true and kind,
And a flood of burning sorrow
Sweeps over my troubled mind.

Yes, the clouds so grimly gather
In the twilight dim and gray,
And they fill with sad foreboding
As they bear sweet hope away.
But oh! the gloom and the silence,
In which I'm standing to-night,
Will fade in the dawning morrow,
Like stars at the breath of light.

SUNSET.

BRIGHT slender strips of crimson sky
Near by the dim horizon lie,
And silent is the song-bird's cry.

The quiet vales in shadow rest;
The mountains wear a golden crest,
Reflected from the amber West.

The boats lie quiet 'long the shore,
The fisher's daily toil is o'er,
God's hand has kept him safe once more.

The sheep are winding down the hill,
And lowing cattle, standing still,
Await the tardy milkmaid's will.

The waning day in sweet repose
Is hast'ning onward to its close,
Yet whither speeding, no one knows.

IMOGENE.

A RIPPLING mass of nut-brown hair,
Tossed from a forehead low and fair;
A warm red mouth, a dimpled chin,
A heart of happiness within:
And loving, merry, twinkling eyes,
As blue and clear as summer skies,
And voice as sweet as e'er was heard,
The carol of the veery bird:
Oh, she's a dainty, winsome queen,
My little sweetheart, Imogene.

When homeward bound I've tarried late,
She lingers by the garden gate,
And with a look one can't define,
She slips her little hand in mine;
And softly climbs upon my chair
To smooth the rugged lines of care,
And with a wilful, childish grace,
Rains loving kisses on my face:
Sure no one's half so proud, I ween,
As I of saucy Imogene.

THE SILVER LINING.

MY soul was dark the livelong day,
And full of sad repining;
I could not trust, I could not pray,
Nor see the "silver lining."
All Nature teemed with happy life,
And birds sang songs of gladness,
Yet in my heart was bitter strife,
A sense of utter sadness.

When purpling clouds were growing dim,
And zephyrs incense bringing,
I heard a sweet, old-fashioned hymn
Some shepherd lads were singing;
It seemed to lift from out my heart
Its weight of care and sorrow,
And bid my gloomy doubts depart,
And trust come with the morrow.

And as to God I raised my voice
All tremulous with weeping,
He bade my weary soul rejoice,
And took me in His keeping;
And as I gazed out toward the West,
Where red the sun was shining,
I felt an inward joy and rest,
And saw the "silver lining."

COOKING SCHOOL.

MAIDEN of rare charms and graces,
Fond of giddy ball-room life,
Could you doff those jewels, laces,
Make a faithful, loving wife?

When the early flush of morning
Paints with gold each roof and spire,
Could you, at a moment's warning,
Kindle bright the kitchen fire?

Answers to these questions render,
Maiden with the lightsome tread:
Could you broil the beefsteak tender?
Could you make a loaf of bread?

When the slothful servant lingers,
Could you waken sharp at six,
And with deft and willing fingers,
For hot cakes the batter mix?

Lustrous eyes of wondrous beauty,
Clear as water in a pool,
Do you know a matron's duty?
Have you been to Cooking School?

THE STREAMLET.

IN pensive mood I love to dream
Beside some cool, meand'ring stream,
Where sunny slope and grassy mead
My thought in sweetest channels lead.

'Tis here, unharrowed by despair,
And free from worry, fret or care,
I love at stilly noon to hie
And let my thoughts go rambling by.

Bright little elfs, with merry glance,
Upon its greensward skip and dance;
And happy lovers meet to woo,
The plighted troth of youth renew.

And as the twilight shadows fall,
And silence deepens over all,
I love to list the dripping oar,
And watch the lights gleam 'long the shore.

Beneath, above me, ev'rywhere,
Sweet music floats adown the air
In fitful murmurs soft and low,
According with the streamlet's flow.

Lulled by these soul-subduing sounds,
My breast with inward peace abounds;
And calmly as these waters glide,
I wait life's closing eventide.

YEARS AGO.

THE skies are leaden, dark and chill,
As on that night when years ago
Upon that lonely bridge we stood
And watched the river's sullen flow.

The fallen leaves, all crisp and sere,
Tossed by the keen wind's cruel blast,
Swept by amid the dark'ning gloom
Like sad wraiths of a vanished past.

We talked of shipwrecks out at sea,
Wrecks stranded on a foreign shore,
And in our sad hearts fancied we
Could hear the distant breakers roar.

Thy hands were warm and strong that night,
And warm thy heart and soul with love;
But now thy form lies pulseless, cold,
And now thy spirit joys above.

Since when that fatal night we watched
The sullen river's seething tide,
How many hopes have shipwrecked been,
And lives unnumbered breathed and died!

And now that river sobs again,
And autumn leaves sweep thro' the air;
But on that bridge alone I stand,
Alone in silence and despair.

IF WE KNEW.

IF we knew the cares and burdens
Crowded in each human heart,
If we knew the secret sorrows
And could feel their sting and smart,
Would we add one drop of bitter
To our neighbor's cup of woe?
Would we censure one unjustly
When the loving angels know?

If we knew the hidden story
Told in anguish and in pain,
Could we pass one by unkindly,
And in silence and disdain?
Oft we see the life-threads woven
In the very strangest way,
And to make a perfect pattern,
There is only One who may.

If we knew that skies would brighten
When the clouds are floating high,
Would we sit down in the shadow
While the days are gliding by?
Would we grieve at little crosses
As they gather round our path,
Did we dream how great the mercies
In the golden aftermath?

If We Knew.

Let us strive to lift the shadow
  Which is clouding others' lives,
And with love to all our fellows,—
  Cherish hope that still survives:
Let us bear them to the sunshine
  Which is bursting from the skies;
Let us guide them to that Heaven,
  Where nor stain nor sorrow lies.

I WONDER.

WILL you love me still, I wonder,
When my cheeks have lost their glow?
When my tresses dark have whitened
As the winter's drifting snow?
Will you smile on me as fondly,
In the days that are to be,
As you did that summer morning
By the dear old trysting-tree?

Will you trust me, dear, I wonder,
Just as firmly then as now?
Will you keep those tender pledges,
And that sacred, loving vow?
Will your love prove strong and steadfast,
And your fond heart beat as warm?
Will it last thro' cloud and sunshine,
And thro' days of blight and storm?

And I wonder, O!—I wonder
If, thro' all the coming years,
There will be no harsh words spoken,
And no bitterness and tears.
Ah! I know your heart is beating
With a love that's pure and true:
But the unknown, doubtful future
I must trust to faith and you.

THE LEGEND OF THE THISTLE.

HAVE you ever heard the legend,
Told long centuries ago,
How the bright-eyed, smiling thistle
Came to be as white as snow?

'Twas a dreary night in winter,
So the ancient story ran,
And the stars were holding vigil
O'er the destinies of man,

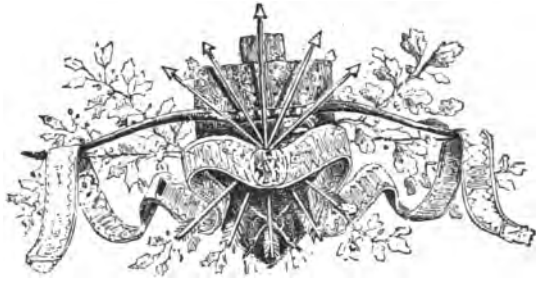
When the Holy Virgin Mother,
With her babe clasped to her breast,
Fled across the sands with Joseph,
Seeking shelter, peace and rest.

In a desert lone, and silent,
'Neath a rock's o'er-hanging brim,
There she nursed the infant Jesus,
Humming lullabies to him.

Through a tiny rocky crevice,
Just beneath her weary feet,
Grew an humble little flow'ret,
Undismayed by wind or heat.

As the suckling babe she nourished
From the fountain pure and true,
Lo, a drop fell on the blossom,
And it changed its rosy hue.

And forevermore the thistle,
  In glad mem'ry of that night,
Blooms within its rocky fastness,
  Clad in spotless, snowy white.



LET ME CARRY THY BURDENS.

MY days are freighted with losses,
The worry and turmoil of strife,
And hard to bear are the crosses
That make up the measure of life;
Yet ever sweet comfort is given,
As daily I humble the knee,
It cometh in language of heaven,
"Let Me carry thy burdens for thee."

Hopes that all fondly I cherished,
And joys that are sunny and bright,
Have faded, alas! and perished,
Like stars at the coming of light;
And yet the dear Master calleth,
In tenderest accents to me—
"Whatever, my child, befalleth,
Let Me carry thy burdens for thee."

LITTLE BESSIE.

DARK the day and sad and dreary,
And the mother sighed for rest,
As she clasped the little darling
Fondly to her loving breast.
'Twas the youngest of the household,
And the pet and pride of all;
But the mother's heart was weary,
And the tears began to fall.

Little Bessie had been watching,
Dreaming o'er the summer rain,
When, on looking up, she found that
Loving mamma's face in pain.
Then the wistful blue orbs opened
In a wond'ring, sweet surprise,
As she lisped in childish accents—
"I see yain in mamma's eyes."

IN THE HAMMOCK.

OUT in the hammock under the trees,
Dreamily swaying, kissed by the breeze,
Swinging so low, softly and slow,
Blissful I live in indolent ease,
List'ning the song of the whisp'ring leaves.

Naught do I know of trouble or care;
The skies above are cloudless and fair;
Rocking so light, airy and slight,
Out in the glorious drowséd air,
Warblers a-twitt'ring songs sweet and rare.

Over my head and under my feet
The blossoming vines are fragrant and sweet;
Swaying so still, drinking my fill,
Down in this lone and sylvan retreat,
Never was joy so great or complete.

A RETROSPECT.

WHEN you and I were young, my dear,
We roamed through fields together,
O'er highland moor and craggy glen,
In search of purple heather.
Oh, how the leaves in wanton play
Before us briskly fluttered!
And how the echoes o'er the hills
Mocked ev'ry word we uttered!

Sometimes your eyes, like twin-born stars,
Aglow with innate fancies,
Seemed full of earnest, brilliant light,
Or shy they seemed as pansies.
Your crowning wealth of flowing hair,
In wavy, fluffy lightness,
Outvied the sun in beauty rare,
In lustre-golden brightness.

To-night the scenes of youth arise,
And on my heart are preying
The mem'ries of that happy day
When first we went a-Maying;
E'en, too, those walks in early June,
When fields were dotted over
With daisies bright with hearts of gold,
And white and purple clover.

A Retrospect.

Those vows we pledged in gloaming time,
    That naught our hearts should sever,
Loom upward to my spirit's ken
    In colors bright as ever.
But years have changed those earthly dreams,
    And taught me that the morrow
To some may bring both faith and hope;
    To others, bitter sorrow.

CHRISTABEL.

THE roses red are growing
By the village garden wall;
The air is softly blowing
Sweetest fragrance over all;
And close by yon fair haven—
Dare I now a secret tell?—
There lives a winsome maiden,
The little Christabel.

With golden tresses flowing,
And with eyes so roguish brown,
And rosy cheeks a-glowing,
There's no fairer maid in town.
O would that I might hover
Near that sweet sequestered dell,
And woo among the clover
The fairy Christabel!

While down the lake we're rowing,
With the breezes light and fair,
And joy my heart o'erflowing,
And with no sad thought or care,
I sighed to be her lover;
Ah! she knew the secret well.
But she loves me like a brother—
The gentle Christabel.

STEADFAST.

FIRM as the faith of the martyrs of old;
Pure as the city whose streets are of gold;
And broad and deep as the fathomless sea,
The measure of friendship I hold for thee.

When the summer's sun dies out of the sky;
When the red rose loses its crimson dye;
When the moutains cease to be wild and high;
Then, and not until then, will my friendship die.

LITTLE FLOSSIE.

WITH heart so sad and weary,
And my soul so *fraught* with woe,
I learned with bitter sorrow
That our dear old home must go:
And thinking o'er the burden
Which my spirit had to bear,
I heard the gentle patter
Of soft footsteps on the stair.

While seated in the shadow,
With my spirit clad in gloom,
There came a childish figure
Bringing sunshine to the room:
She seemed so pure and guileless
As she climbed upon my knee
And said, "I love you, papa,
Ain't oo dad that oo've dot *me?*"

Yes, yes, my little Flossie,
Your dear papa's very glad,
And when you're bright and happy,
He ought never to be sad.
I kissed the little darling
As I drew her close to me;
But in my heart kept ringing,—
"Ain't oo dad that oo've dot *me?*"

FACE TO FACE.

IF my heart could cease its throbbing,
And its weary ache and pain,
And this tender bond of friendship
Were quite free from blot or stain,
Then I'd greet you, oh! so gladly,
With my old, familiar way,
And I'd bless the happy meeting
When the years had rolled away.

If my eyes were firm and steady
When I looked you in the face,
And no ling'ring ghost of sadness
Could I there discern or trace,
Then so sweetly could I listen
To your wonted cheering tone,
And my outward life would never
Show the wrong that you have done.

If your soul had been but steadfast,
And your life had known no ill;
Had there been but less of bitter,
I might gladly trust you still;
But to greet you as I used to,
In the old familiar way,—
Oh! I cannot, till in Heaven
We shall meet for aye and aye.

MY LOVE.

MY Love is modest, winsome, shy,
And full of kind and tender feeling;
Her voice is like a zephyr's sigh,
A happy, sunny soul revealing.

Her eyes are blue as summer skies,
And warm they are with light and gladness;
Their depths within no shadow lies,
And naught of dewy, pensive sadness.

Her wavy-flowing, chestnut hair
Is parted in the simplest fashion,
And wreathes a brow all snowy-fair,
Distraught by neither care nor passion.

My Love's, forsooth, a loving girl,
And brave and gallant knights have sought her;
Yet bold must be the noble earl
That wooes and wins my charming daughter.

MAY-DAY.

PROUD orchards are drifting like snowflakes their blossoms,
And tall meadow-grasses are bending with dew,
While light fleecy cloudlets sail drowsily over—
White shallops they seem on an ocean of blue.

The wild tuneful notes of the red-breasted robin
Harmonious float on the redolent breeze,
And down by green willows the silver-voiced brooklet
Hums sweetly a song to the low-sobbing trees.

With spoils of the woods scores of light-hearted children
Are busily twining fresh garlands and gay,
For to-morrow they crown, as is the glad custom,
Their hearts' dearest idol—the "Queen of the May."

OLD LETTERS.

'TWAS only a packet of letters,
And tied with a ribbon blue,
Yet it made me think of a spring-time
When the gold of hope was new.
As I opened them all so fondly,
And glanced them tenderly o'er,
I thought of the days of my girlhood,
And longed to live them once more.

'Twas only a packet of letters,
All faded and gray with age,
And the tears welled up to my eyelids
As gravely I scanned each page.
They're letters from kind, loving heart-friends,
Whose forms I'll never see more,
And sadly I gazed at the packet,
And laid it back in the drawer.

THE MERRY SONGSTER.

OH! I'm a merry songster
A-swinging in the tree;
My mother's gone a-hunting
A tempting bit for me.
My nest is made of cotton,
And softly lined with down;
And I can sweetly warble
As any bird in town.

And in the early morning,
Out in the maple-tree,
You'll find me ever singing,
And happy as can be.
Last night we gave a concert,
Just on the stroke of five;
Came great and little birdies,
The gayest throng alive.

Oh! I'm a merry songster,
As pretty as you see;
My wings are painted yellow,
Just like the golden bee.
I care not what the weather,
Nor what the harvests be;
God feeds the little sparrow,
And He'll remember me.

DAISY.

MY wee little Daisy, I loved her so!
And now she is lying under the snow;
Under the snow, oh! so cold and so white,
And sadly I mourn my darling to-night.
How shy and how loving she used to be!
In my waking dreams I seem her to see,
Climbing my knee with her dear romping feet,
Wooing my love with her kisses so sweet.

Dear wee little Daisy, I miss her so!
How sorely I miss her, no one can know.
Her childish prattle, her fond coaxing way,
Making home sunshine through all of the day.
Sweet was the look in her bonny twin eyes,
Merry with laughter and blue as the skies;
Day-time, or night-time, wherever I go,
My bright little sunbeam, I miss her so!

There's no little one to romp with me now,
No one to swing on the old apple bough—
No one to work for! Alas, and alas!
No wreath of daisy-chains made on the grass!
I know she dwells in a sunnier clime,
And, dear little heart, I'll meet her sometime;
But oh! my soul will be longing her so,
When the spring-time comes, and the daisies blow.

THE DEAD PAST.

WHY mourn when the summer is ended?
Why grieve for the days of the past?
You know that the gloom and the shadow
May come but not always will last.
Go forward to meet the bright future:
Enjoy the sweet hope of to-day:
The sun will be shining to-morrow,—
Bid sorrow and sadness away.

Why waste precious moments in sighing
O'er friends you have cherished and lost?
Don't you know that over the border
They only before you have crossed?
Why sorrow and weep in the gloaming,
When the dream and romance of life
Have ended for aye and forever,
And with them the pain and the strife?

Why long for the treasures of spring-time?
Why yearn for the gladness of youth?
Go, look at the beauties of autumn,
And learn their sweet lessons of truth!
And think of the light and the sunshine,
And yield not to bitter despair;
Each soul has its measure of anguish,
And each has its burden to bear.

FORGET ME NOT.

ONE summer, in the morning hours,
I walked thro' banks of laughing flow'rs,
Where roses red and pansies grew,
Impearled with silver drops of dew.

The air was bracing and serene;
The garden one enchanting scene;
And in my stroll I chanced a spot
Where bloomed the sweet forget-me-not.

I culled the fairest, brightest, best,
And bunched them for each tardy guest,
Then hurried in, 'twas growing late,
And laid a nosegay by each plate.

Each smiling guest then took a seat,
And praised my posies fair and sweet;
But there sat one, both grand and tall,
Whose voice I loved above them all.

He raised his eyes to mine and smiled,
And spoke about my tresses wild;
Then with his hand upon my head,
"Forget me not," he softly said.

But late that night, while in the dance,
He whispered low, with meaning glance:
"Fair one, the world, on land or sea,
Holds naught that I'd compare with thee."

And as he fondly held my hand,
He placed thereon a golden band,
And round the brilliant setting rare,
Forget-me-nots were gleaming fair.

PRECIOUS OINTMENT.

DO not keep your precious ointment
Shut up close and laid away,
Half-forgotten in the closet;
Shed it on some friend to-day.
Little acts of love and mercy,
Little self-denials now;
Hand the cup of cooling water;
Soothe the weary, burning brow.

Gather blossoms for the living,
They'll enjoy their sweet perfume;
Do not wait till they are resting
In the dark and silent tomb.
They may brighten life's dull pathway;
Some poor suff'rer they may cheer;
Send them in their fragrant beauty,
Heav'n may seem more near and dear.

Read to them some soothing chapter
In a low and gentle voice;
Speak some word of tender counsel,
Words that make the heart rejoice.
Comfort souls with sorrow laden,
Help them bear each heavy cross;
It will make your own life sweeter,
It will purify the dross.

Precious Ointment.

As you walk the rugged journey,
  Stretch a helping hand to save;
You will reap in twofold measure
  As you near the open grave.
Tell to them the "Old, Old Story,"
  It will cheer some broken heart;
Shed your ointment gladly, freely;
  Act a worthy Christian's part.

THANKSGIVING.

WHEN the bloom has quit the clover
And the summer days have fled;
When the meadows thickly over
With the russet leaves are spread;
When the snow is on the mountain,
And the frost upon the pane,
Then we'll give a hearty greeting
To Thanksgiving Day again.

When the purse-strings gladly open
To the friendless and the poor,
And to souls in want and trouble
Comes a swift and ready cure;
When a warm and kindly feeling
In every heart is born,
Then there'll be a royal welcome
To our glad Thanksgiving morn.

When the wild wind whistles shrilly
'Cross the valley, hill and wold;
When the days grow short and chilly,
And the nights are waxing cold;
Then, O Father, safely sheltered
From the cruel, blighting storm,
Will we render our thanksgiving
For Thy tender mercies warm.

IN MEMORIAM.

REV. WILLIAM PRATT BREED, D. D.

A SOLEMN stillness reigns around the place
Where sweetly sleeps our dear belovéd dead;
And as we call to mind his sainted face
We're hardly conscious of the tears we shed.
Our hearts are heavy with a sense of pain,
For nevermore within that sacred aisle
We'll hear his clear and ringing voice again,
Nor list his prayer, nor greet his loving smile.

Yet not for him our saddened hearts now mourn,
But for ourselves who knew him, loved him best.
His body waits the Resurrection Morn
To join its spirit in a world of rest.
That voice so often raised the good to bless,
The church will sadly miss; e'en, too, that form;
His loving heart and words of tenderness;
The pressure of his hand, so dear and warm.

The kindling eye, its firm and steadfast gaze;
The gen'rous heart; the ever listening ear;
The sympathetic tone, and gentle ways,
We'll ever hold in loving mem'ry dear.
And ofttimes at the wonted hour of prayer
We'll softly speak his kind and loving deeds,
And waft heart-thoughts on pinions bright and fair,
Where joys his soul freed from life's weary needs.

In Memoriam,

As Death has sealed his lips, oh, who will come
  And carry on the work his life begun?
And who will enter now the mourner's home,
  And cheer the agéd ere their race is run?
Long shall we miss him from our little band,
  And yearn his friendship once so warm and true.
But, Oh! up yonder in that perfect land,
  He'll sing of Love's redeeming grace anew.

O Thou, who stilledst the waves of Galilee,
  And shapedst the course of worlds from earth to sun,
Teach us on lowly-bended, reverent knee,
  With child-like lips to say, "Thy will be done."
And soon, yes, soon, in but a little while,
  We, too, shall wander in those realms of light,
Where nought doth dwell of sinfulness or guile;
  Where troubles never fret, nor sorrows ever blight.

EASTER LILIES.

SWEET Easter lilies, immaculate, white,
Lifting your heads in the clear morning light,
Deep in your snow-mantled bosoms you hold
Beauty and fragrance and riches of gold.

Pure virgin lilies, from earth newly born,
Welcome, thrice welcome, this bright Easter morn!
Bring with your advent a message to men,
Telling the Saviour has risen again.

Bright Easter lilies, so lovely in bloom,
Offering meet for the altar and tomb,
May ever our hearts learn daily to grow
Spotless as you in your raiment of snow.

THE SONG THRUSH.

WHILST sitting alone in the twilight,
My listening soul in a hush,
I heard the clear voice of a songster,
The low, mellow song of the thrush.

So thrilling his notes were and flute-like,
Ineffably tender and sweet,
That I stood as a spirit enraptured,
Enjoying the magical treat.

And I thought how like unto Heaven,
This beautiful world would now be,
If we in our hearts could keep singing
Like this sweet, wild bird in the tree.

And I questioned my sad soul whether
This lesson to learn we should try,—
Keep singing in all sorts of weather,
Be sunshine or rain in the sky.

TWO PICTURES.

THERE is music and dancing, gladness and mirth,
The glitter of rubies and diamonds of worth;
And close by the casement, in rich silken gown,
Gaze sweet roguish blue eyes in eyes of dark brown.

Exotics, fresh-blooming and costly and rare,
And Jacqueminot roses and lilies so fair,
Lend sweetly their charms to the brilliant-lit room,
And gone are all traces of sorrow and gloom.

Out into the shadows, the sleet and the rain,
Belabored with hunger and anguish and pain,
An outcast, in garments loose, tattered and thin,
Stands drinking with wonder the glory within.

She notes all the splendor, the wealth and the light,
And in contrast, a life as dark as the night:
Then quick to the river she stealthily glides,
And a desolate soul drifts out with the tides.

THE JUBILEE OF THE SPARROWS.

OH, what is this tumult and stir and commotion?
And what are the sparrows all talking about?
Say, why do they beckon and nod to each other?
Do they fear that some one their secret will out?

'Twas early this morning I met a gay party
All busily chatt'ring way down by the brook;
Each bird to the other some news was relating,
And they never so much as gave me a look.

Pray, what is this matter that seems so important?
Oh, do you not know, sir, and cannot you say
Why each little heart's in a whirl of emotion,
And throbs as a leaf on a mad, windy day?

'Tis that they're expecting a host of relations,
All bright, merry cousins from woodland and mere,
And strangers from over the surf-beating ocean,
So blithesome and chipper, and full of wild cheer.

And this seems the reason the little brown sparrow
Is glad when the long, dreary winter is o'er,
For spring on her wings bears the wealth of the tropics,
And scatters profusion from hill-top to shore.

UNDER THE SNOW.

UNDER the snow the daisies sleep
Silent and cold and still,
While drifting snow-flakes wanton creep
Over the vale and hill;
But winter's reign will soon be o'er,
And then thro' field and lane
The summer's sun will shine once more,
And daisies bloom again.

Under the snow the loved are laid
Away from mortal sight;
Gone are the soul and joy that made
The fireside warm and bright.
But God is watching overhead,
And knows our bitter pain;
And when the last good-nights are said,
Our dead shall bloom again.

AN AUTUMN REVERIE.

ALONE in the autumn twilight,
I list to the rustling of leaves,
And the gentle, tireless patter
Of the rain from the dripping eaves;
And out from the depth and shadow,
Comes the chime of a distant bell,
And its tones seem strange and muffled,
And sad like a funeral knell.

I turn from the gloomy casement,
To the fire-light, ruddy and warm,
And softly mingle my weeping
With the tears of the blinding storm;
For to-night my soul is yearning,
As it lists to the belfry's chime,
For the dear, kind hearts once cherished,
Asleep in a sunnier clime.

I gaze in the glowing embers,
And in regions of fancy stray
To brighter scenes of the gloaming,
In the years that have passed away;
And sweet and fair are the visions
That come thronging my lonely room,
For guests to my heart have entered,
And lifted its shadow and gloom.

An Autumn Reverie.

I dream of familiar faces,
  And they smile and beckon to me,
And fondly I bid them welcome,
  As they gather about my knee;
And though autumn leaves may rustle,
  And the rain and the shadows fall,
By the quiet, smiling fire-light,
  My heart holds a feast with them all.

A VALENTINE.

FAIR lady, dost thou know my soul is stirred,
When gazing in that lovely face of thine,
To pen thee words no mortal ear has heard,
And make thy heart my only earthly shrine?
Tho' oft in foreign lands I've travelled long,
And mingled with the gay, the fair, the young,
One form alone shall ever haunt me more—
Thy form, dear lady, whom I most adore.
And now my ardent soul would learn its fate,
And seek the boon I crave, ere yet too late;
'Tis this: Proud lady, may I call thee mine,
And be thy knight—thy tend'rest Valentine?

GRANDMA'S VALENTINE.

ST. Valentine's coming to-morrow,
And I'm not a young maiden I know,
But won't some one send me a token
For the sake of the dear long ago?
A dainty and sweet little missive,
Full of loving words, tender and true,
Or a bunch of sweet-smelling posies,
Tied with bonny bright ribbons of blue?

All the handsome, brave-hearted laddies,
Whose young lives are so happy and bright,
Are conning sweet nonsense in verses,
And it hardly appears to me right
That grandma, because she is helpless,
And burdened with sorrow and old,
Forgotten should be by the young folks,
And left out in the darkness and cold.

Look! here is a valentine, grandma,
All the way down from Heaven it came,
This fair, little, motherless stranger,
To be called after grandma's own name:
And nurse to the old lady's keeping,
Gave a tiny soft bundle of white—
A dimpled and blue-eyed wee darling,
Crowned with fine curling ringlets of light.

THE ROBIN.

HAPPY robin, strangely shy,
Glad we are to have you nigh;
As you mount your wings and fly
Toward the bright and azure sky,
Where the purple shadows lie,
Angel spirits list your cry.

Pray, sweet robin, tell to me
What your bright eyes daily see
As you swing on yonder tree!
What you chant so merrily!
May your wild life ever be,
Like your song, both rich and free.

As you flit on whirring wings,
E'en the heart of Nature sings;
Buds and blossoms down she flings,
And the wood exultant rings.
Robin red, your coming brings
Thoughts of saddest, sweetest things.

REST.

MY soul is wearied, and my feet are tired,
My heart depressed;
And O, dear Saviour, I have long desired
For perfect rest.

The days are long, the nights are full of pain;
Thou knowest best!—
Yet still I yearn for Thy sweet voice again,
Bidding me rest.

The cruel thorns have pierced my toil-worn hands,
My aching breast;
My weary feet been scorched by burning sands,
Seeking for rest.

When life is dark, and Heav'n almost in view,
And cares molest,
'Tis hard to walk this barren desert through,
Yearning for rest.

Yet, O, dear Father, 'twill soon be o'er,
For down the West,
The shadows brighten, and I see the shore,
Where I shall rest.

PENITENT.

IN the twilight I am calling,
And no ray of light I see:
Darker than the shadows falling,
Is my soul unblest by Thee.

Take my heart, so sadly erring,
Fill it with Thy grace so free;
See, my eyes with tears are streaming,
Gazing on sweet Calvary.

Every secret fault confessing,
Ev'ry selfish thought and sin;
O'er my soul shed Thou Thy blessing,
Come and cleanse me, Lord, within.

For Thy favor I am longing;
O, dear Jesus, help Thou me!
Take my life with all its sinning,
Consecrate it, Lord, to Thee.

MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES.

DOWN in the meadow, one bright summer day,
Sweet Mollie and I were raking hay;
Raking the hay while the light breezes bold
Were tossing the ringlets of radiant gold.
So 'witching her beauty that I did this—
Looked in her brown eyes and gave her a kiss.

Dear grandma then called in gentle refrain,
"Hasten, my children, I'm 'fraid it will rain."
I looked at Mollie, the maid with the rake;
Then, in merriest laughter, each did break—
"Never fear, grandma, we're wasting no time,
We are making the hay while the sun doth shine."

THE LEGEND OF THE MOSS-ROSE.

HAVE you heard the ancient story
Which the German peasants tell,
Of the kind and loving angel,
Whom the flowers love so well?

'Twas a morn in early springtime,
Whilst reposing in the shade
Of a tall and fragrant rose-bush,
That a priceless gift he made.

On awaking from the slumber,
Where his weary head had pressed,
Thanked he from his soul the roses
For his sweet, refreshing rest.

And he gladly, freely promised,
Where on earth they chanced to grow,
Any fairer boon to grant them,
That his bounty could bestow.

Then the spirit of the rose-bush,
Without thought of ill or harm,
Softly murmured to the angel,—
"Grant me yet a richer charm."

And the loving angel answered,
"Thy sweet will I may not cross;
I bequeath to thee, this moment,
An immortal dress of moss."

The Legend of the Moss-rose.

And for evermore the moss-rose,
  Gayest of her queenly race,
Stands apart from all her sisters,
  Clothed in modest, simple grace.

TOO LATE.

I OPENED the door of the cage,
And suffered my bird to go free;
And tho' with tears I mourned and sought it again,
Yet it never came back to me.
It roams thro' the wildwood with joy in its breast,
And in the lone forest has found a new nest.

I hastily uttered a word,
And in bitterness turned aside,
And the wounded heart of my once cherished friend
Was estranged forever in pride.
The bird once escaped will return ne'er again,
Nor the one I have spurned in bitter disdain.

OCTOBER.

DAWNS October crisp and clear,
Promise bringing of glad cheer;—
Cooling breezes; amber skies,
Where no trace of shadow lies.
Dewy fields our senses greet;
Gone the lurid summer heat.

Purpling grapes are hanging high;
Golden fruits enchant the eye;
Autumn-tints the meadows hold,
Hues of crimson, russet, gold.
Wealth and beauty everywhere
Crown October, ripe and rare.

Proud at having done her best,
Nature seems at perfect rest.
Ours to gather, garner, reap,
For the winter's daily keep
Treasures of the season past
Joys all coming time shall last.

DECORATION DAY.

CARELESS stranger, softly tread
Through God's lone city of the dead,
For 'tis the hallowed resting place
Of heroes slain to save a race.

They pledged both willing hands and hearts,
Forsaking home for distant parts,
Led on by battle's din and strife,
And bugle sound, and drum and fife.

O cruel, devastating war!
O carnage field and crimson gore!
O life blood ebbing fast away,
From North and South, from blue and gray!

When Stars and Stripes float on the air,
And hearts are bowed in fervent prayer,
Proclaim to all posterity—
"They died that all men should be free!"

Yes, sound their praises far and wide,
O'er hill and vale and mountain side,
And let your bosoms thrill with joy,
Brave comrades of the soldier boy.

And hail, thrice hail, with banners gay
This welcome "Decoration Day!"
With immortelles and roses strew
The graves alike of gray and blue!

TO-MORROW.

TO-MORROW, Love, to-morrow we'll be happy, you and I;
No cloud shall dim the brightness of our blue and sunny sky:
And 'cross the seas with pennants white our gallant ship shall sail,
And keel and rudder both withstand the fierce and angry gale.

To-morrow will we fashion high our castles in the air,
And we'll furnish them throughout with a poet's pride and care;
To-morrow, too, your muse will sing her sweetest, brightest song,
And we'll be gay and joyous as the summer day is long.

To-morrow we will wander through the fragrant meadows sweet,
And cull the fairest blossoms that are growing at our feet:
And the love within our hearts shall have full and ample sway,
And crown our lives with joy and peace forever and for aye.

LONELINESS.

ONE evening when the stars were few,
And trellised vines were wet with dew,
I flung the casement open wide,
And watched the ships at anchor ride.

Strange, weird-like shadows cast the trees,
And wildly blew the fitful breeze;
And 'cross the dark and murky lea,
I heard the moaning of the sea.

Alone, beside the window-sill,
I lingered till the night grew chill,
And dreamed of happy days of yore,
When life with joy was brimming o'er.

A LITTLE HAND.

THERE'S nothing so dear in all the wide land
As the tender clasp of a little hand;
'Twill comfort and help, 'twill strengthen and cheer,
And lift from your heart its burden and fear;
'Twill make you courageous, gentle, yet strong,
And thrill you with fervor, joyance and song.

Its timid caress, its vigor of love,
Will fill you with dreams of the angels above
As it seems to say in a strange, sweet way—
"I'll guide you aright, if only I may,
To that beautiful, fair and heav'nly land;
Your sorrows I know, and I understand."

MY LOVER.

I STAND in the doorway and wait for his coming
With my soul full of joy and my heart full of song;
O where and O where is my truant lad staying,
And I wonder, O why does he tarry so long?

The birds are astir and the golden bees humming,
And my pulse beating fast at the click of the gate;
Serene are the skies and the rosy morn flushing,
And I yearn for my lover, who loiters so late.

The fields are abloom with the sweet-scented clover,
And the robins are building their spring nests above;
While faint on my ear comes the barking of Rover,
As I list for the voice of my lagging true love.

The drowsy, gay blackbird his sweet song is singing,
For my lad's merry whistle I listen in vain;
The sheep on the hillside have ceased their low bleating,
And I look for my lover o'er field and o'er lane.

The cattle are lowing, the roses are blushing,
And far down in the meadow my laggard I see,
While fresh on the air his gay laughter is ringing,
And so bright the wild flowers he's gathered for me.

My Lover.

While with rapture and joy my proud heart is beating,
I'll whisper it softly, the name of my lover,
My brave hearted gallant, for whom I am waiting,
My pride and my darling, my—wee, little brother.

MUSINGS.

I SIT and muse in the gloaming,
And see, or I seem to see,
A youth and a maiden plighting
Their troth by the linden-tree;
Above them the sky bends loving,
And the earth lies calm and still,
Save when from the shadows lifteth
The soul of the whip-poor-will.

Anon and the picture fadeth,
And dim are my eyes with tears,
For I think of one that sleepeth,
The friend of my early years.
And the thought will ever linger
And the pulse of being thrill,
Though changed grow the face of Nature,
And hushed be the whip-poor-will.

ONLY A SMILE.

'TWAS only a smile that was given
From a friend that I chanced to meet,
With a face as bright as a sunbeam,
In the busy walks of the street.
My soul was in darkness and sorrow,
And my heart all burdened with pain;
And tears to my eyelids came welling,
And I strove to stay them in vain.

'Twas only a smile that was given,
And the donor went on her way,
Yet it brought to my heart a sweetness
Through the whole of that live-long day.
'Twas a glance so tender and hopeful,
So sweet and so loving and true,
That my troubles—I quite forgot them,
And I found myself smiling too.

A VISION.

I SIT in the early twilight,
And see, or I seem to see,
A fair little childish figure,
In likeness resembling me;
And out of the gath'ring stillness,
As slowly the shadows creep,
There comes in a sweet, low whisper—
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

And dear are the thoughts that flutter
From out the shadowy gloom,
As Memory backward wanders
To a bright, familiar room,
Where a band of laughing children,
All eager and trim and neat,
Are gathered in sweet abandon,
At a loving mother's feet.

I dream of that gentle mother
And the child so like to me,
And in contrast, strangely bitter,
Are the weary years that be.
I wake from my idle dreaming,
As darker the shadows creep,
And I breathe in accents tender—
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

THE GOLDEN-ROD.

ACROSS the sun-lit wold and mere,
Where leaves are rustling brown and sere
Upon the dry and withered sod,
Smiles sweet and grand the golden-rod.

Spring decks the earth with lilies fair,
And summer with its roses rare;
But autumn with its polypod,
And minarets of golden-rod.

Hail, hail to thee, most gorgeous flower!
We hail thee emblem of our power.
May hill and vale thy praises ring,
And crown thee Freedom's floral king!

LULLABY SONG.

LULLA-BY, lulla-by, lulla-by-by!
The bright stars are keeping watch in the sky:
Come, baby, come to thy wee little nest,
And pillow thy head on mamma's warm breast:
Smile in thy dreams, loving seraphs are nigh!
Lulla-by, lulla-by, lulla-by-by!

Lulla-by, lulla-by lulla-by-by!
Speed thee to slumber-land! hush, baby-by!
Haste thee, my darling, sweetly to sleep,
Angels, bright angels, thy pure soul will keep!
Winsome, wee baby to shadow-land hie!
Lulla-by, lulla-by, lulla-by-by!

FAREWELL.

FAREWELL! God speed thee on thy way
Across the waste of waters blue;
From dangers guard thee night and day,
And keep thee gentle, kind and true.

Farewell! Though weary leagues apart,
On foreign land or alien sea,
We'll draw together heart to heart
In closest bonds of sympathy.

God keep thee in His tender care
Where'er on earth thy footsteps roam,
And under skies serene and fair
Return the wanderer to his home.

MY HAUNT.

I KNOW a nook—a quiet nook
Down by a willow-shaded brook—
Where balmy zephyrs listless blow,
And piping plovers come and go;
Where violets in purple mass
Hide in the cool and dewy grass,
And busy insects' drowsy hum
From leaf and blossom idly come.

Full often by its only stream
At eventide I love to dream,
And while the closing hours of day
In peace and solitude away,
Or watch the wary, gleaming trout
Within its waters dart about,
Or list from off its weedy shore
The ceaseless plash of dipping oar.

'Tis there, from sordid care set free,
My heart's attuned to sympathy
With sighing of the gentle breeze
Through tall and leafy-mantled trees,
Sweet echoes of the windy hills,
And music of the dancing rills:
And there my soul is filled with love
Of Him who reigns and rules above.

IN THE CONVENT.

THEY told me that all Heaven was here,
And all without was gloom and fear;
That joy and song were born within;
Therefore I gladly entered in
These convent walls so grim and bare,
And humbly did the burdens share;
E'en sought in works of love to hide
My conscious self, my fallen pride.

Ah! this is no sweet Heaven to me;
For though I pray on bended knee,
I feel no joy or holy calm.
My stricken heart here knows no balm,
Nor can my sad and suff'ring soul
E'er hope to reach that promised goal,
Nor find in this lone, dreary waste,
The cure of blighted love misplaced.

Sure this is no sweet rest for me—
In these grim walls it cannot be.
And yet they told me rest was here,
Within this house was friendly cheer.
That calm and peace to me might come,
I left my girlhood's sunny home,
And sought to hide from friend and foe
The anguish'd soul, the bitter woe.

In the Convent.

These gates—their dull and pond'rous clang
But adds one more and deeper pang.
Amid the darkness and the gloom
I wander through each lonely room,
And yearn for God's rich, saving grace,
The sight of some familiar face,
Sweet home and kindred—friends once more,
And all the happy scenes of yore.

"OUT OF THE ASHES."

[As some of our readers may not be familiar with the origin of the phrase "Out of the Ashes," I would say that the phœnix was a fabulous bird of Egypt, which was said to live a hundred years; and that, when it died, another bird, just like it, arose from its ashes.]

"OUT of the ashes" of travail and pain,
Many's the soul that has risen again;
"Out of the ashes" of gloom and despair,
Steadfast in purpose, unspotted and fair.

Sunken in sorrow, degraded and low,
God will enclothe you in raiments of snow;
"Out of the ashes," O, heed the sweet call:
Hope and salvation and pardon to all.

"Out of the ashes," O yes, faithful one,
"Out of the ashes" shall honor be won!
Gold from the ore in the furnace shall be
Sifted like wheat in its rich purity.

"Out of the ashes" of darkness and night,
Heaven its glories shall lift into sight;
"Out of the ashes" "The Bright Morning Star"
Shall light you across Life's treacherous bar!

AUTUMN.

THE restless spirit of autumn
Came wandering through the air,
Caressing with cold, white fingers
The hills and the valleys fair.

Out in my garden were growing,
In varying sheen and hue,
Bright asters, crimson and purple,
And gentians—the sky's own blue.

One night, when the wind was sighing
Across the meadow and wold,
I dreamt of my nurslings tender,
A prey to the wind and cold.

And the morn beheld my treasures,
Lifeless and withered and dead:
Their light gone out in the darkness,
Their souls to their Giver fled.

SEPTEMBER.

THE golden-rod's bright tassels
With wealth are bending down;
The leaves within the forest
Are crimson-hued and brown.

The fringes of the gentian,
The azure blue outvie;
The stately, queenly asters
Put on their richest dye.

The purpling grapes in clusters
Hang heavy by the wall;
And mellow golden pippins
Hold feast enough for all.

The ripened grain is garnered;
The days are shortening fast;
The birds are flying southward,
The summer's bloom is past.

WHITE CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

BEAUTIFUL white Chrysanthemums,
Born of the frost and snow,
More chaste in your stately beauty,
And fairest of flow'rs that blow;
When the roses sweet have perished,
And the summer's bloom is o'er,
You waken in all your glory,
And give us one blessing more.

Beautiful white Chrysanthemums,
Bright smiling faces and true,
A happy greeting we render,
And royal welcome to you:
As guest in the darkened chamber,
Or gracing the festive hall,
You rise in your regal splendor,
And gladden the hearts of all.

Fair as a dream of the summer,
Sweet as a secret untold,
You bloom alone in the autumn,
Braving the storm and cold.
Beautiful white Chrysanthemums,
Meet for the altar and tomb,
Through brightest and darkest weather
Your presence lightens the gloom.

THE PAINTER AND THE SCULPTOR.

DO you possess, O painter,
  The magic hand to try,
The tear of joy that glistens
  Within a mother's eye?

The ripple of the brooklet,
  The murmur of the sea,
The singing of the forest,
  Can you paint these for me?

Have you the cunning, sculptor,
  To chisel out of stone,
A sigh of human anguish,
  The weary, helpless moan?

Or, with your trusty mallet,
  Can carve, with genius rare,
A little child's sweet laughter,
  Or lisping, artless pray'r?

O wise, renownèd painter,
  With all your art and skill,
There's something yet on canvas
  Which you cannot instill.

And you, O learnèd sculptor,
  There are some things you may,
But cannot on cold marble
  The signs of life portray.

The Painter and the Sculptor.

Implanted by the Father,
  There's an immortal soul,
That permeates all Nature,
  And sanctifies the whole!

And this it is enhances
  The humblest life there is,
Which none but God can fathom,
  The power alone is His.

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THANKSGIVING.

ACCEPT, O Lord, we humbly pray,
Our thanks on this Thanksgiving Day,
For summer's heat and winter's cold,
And loves and blessings manifold.

Nor direful scourge nor war's alarms
Brood o'er our land, nor aught that harms,
But peace and plenty reign supreme
By mountain, vale and forest stream.

White-pinioned ships bring to our doors
Rich harvests from far-distant shores,
And art and science through the land,
Fling knowledge with a bounteous hand.

We thank Thee for sweet toil and rest,
And this year's vintage, richly blest;
For gathered fruits and garnered grain,
For leaf and blight, for joy and pain.

And on this glad Thanksgiving Morn,
May faith and trust anew be born,
While grateful hearts and voices raise
A song of gladness to Thy praise.

IN THE HAMMOCK.

OUT in the hammock all blissful I lie,
Peacefully scanning the great ocean-sky,
Watching the cloud-ships float lazily by.

Kissed by the gentle yet tremulous breeze,
Lulled by the music of many-voiced trees,
Tranquilly rest I in indolent ease.

Listlessly swaying, a rocking so low,
Seeming a mummy in lace-work of snow,
Never a trouble or sorrow I know.

Here, when from duty my spirit's set free,
Lie I as happy as happy can be,
Dreaming of thee, my love, dreaming of thee.

MY LETTER.

O WHAT news will it bring? Will it tell of a love
That is tender and pure as the angels' above?
Will it speak of a hope that is faithful and true,
And as bright as the stars in the Heaven's own blue?
Will it come to my heart as a sweet song of old?
Will it gild the dark clouds with the sunshine of gold?
Will it bear me glad tidings of one I hold dear,
While it floods my sad heart with its cordial and cheer?
Then, good postman, if so, quickly bring me, I pray,
The dear letter I'm waiting from one far away.

Does it breathe of a love once a joy and a pride
That has ebbed from the soul like an outgoing tide?
Does it speak of a heart that has wandered away?
Of the promises broken forever and aye?
Does it whisper of joys that shall never depart,
Or a burden of sorrow doth add to my heart?
Of a rapturous greeting so near will it tell,
Or intrude with the gloom of eternal farewell?
Still, I prithee, O postman, to tarry not late,
But to bring me my letter whatever its fate.

THE POET'S VENTURE.

I SAT me down with earnest will
To write a book with all my skill,
And from the store-house of my mind
I brought each treasure I could find;
Then growing more courageous, bold,
I had it bound in green and gold,
And with the highest form of grace
I sent it on its way apace
To countries near and far away,
Among the thoughtless, proud and gay.
Whether 'twill bring me joy or woe,
Or loss or gain, I do not know:
But patiently I'll wait to see
What fate may have in store for me.

MAY SONG.

SWEET vernal lilacs with dewdrops are bending,
And vi'lets true-hearted are scenting the grass;
Kingcups in dank, fragrant meadows are coining
Their gold by the millions—a bright shining mass.

Notes of the silver-tongue brooklet come stealing
Where love-birds are piping their matins anew;
And soft, balmy airs with incense rich-laden,
Are threading the mazes of Heaven's pure blue.

Light-bosomed trees are their banners displaying,
And butterflies painting fair orchard and lane;
Sweets from the clovers are honey-bees culling,
So grateful, thrice grateful, for May-time again.

BEHIND THE MASK.

BEHIND the mask the smiling face
Oft hides a world of care;
Hopes buoyant once as thistle-down,
Now spectres of despair.

Behind the mask who knows the grief
That surges in the breast;
The heavy burdens silent borne,
And nights of sad unrest?

Behind the mask who knows the storm
Of woe within the heart;
The anguish and the bitter pain,
The cruel, stinging smart?

Behind the mask who knows the wrong
The troubled soul endures;
The broken vows, the blighted loves,
The world's pomp never cures?

Behind the mask we never know
How many sorrows hide:
The wretchedness, the tears that flow
From souls severely tried.

TO IRENE.

THOSE fond, endearing words of thine,
Thee sent thy absent, loving brother,
Recalled sweet thoughts of "Auld Lang Syne,"
That time nor distance ne'er can smother.

And, Oh! in his reply to thee,
So fraught with earnest, tender feeling,
I can thy heart reflected see,
A pure and steadfast love revealing.

God grant that soon, in wonted place,
There'll be a joyful, happy meeting,
When friends and kindred face to face
Thy cherished brother will be greeting.

SOMETIME.

SOMETIME you'll think of these summer days,
When the mist hangs low in purple haze,
And with your heart all burdened with pain
Long for their sweetness over again.

Sometime in fancy your thoughts will rove,
And wander off to a leafy grove
Where a girlish form, with soul-full eyes,
Smiled at your coming, in glad surprise.

Sometime you'll dream of a garden sweet,
Where happy lovers were wont to meet;
Where roses bloomed by the garden wall
And sifted their fragrance over all.

And oft when threading your way alone,
Your soul will cry with a stifled moan,
And too late you'll learn with lashes wet
The height and depth of that word—regret.

And when your locks have silver'd with age,
Sometime you'll think of a turned-down page,
And dream of a form so young and fair,
And waken to find you clasp but air.

SUMMER.

FULL, fair and sweet are the summer days,
Dreamily fading in purple haze;
From the wood and fields doth idly come
The sound of the cricket's drowsy hum.
The song of summer's heard in the breeze,
And the sunbeams glance thro' swaying trees.
A sense of the sweet reigns everywhere,
And the breath of roses scents the air.

Bright are the blossoms in wood and dell,
Where the mosses creep and flower-buds swell,
And the sweet-voiced throstle's liquid note
On the slumbrous air is borne afloat.
The murm'ring rill and the singing stream
Faint echoes seem of some far-off dream;
And the nodding corn and bending rye,
All ripe for the golden harvests lie.

HEART'S-EASE.

ONE summer in the early hours
I strolled thro' Nature's fairy bowers,
Where banks of smiling flowers grew,
All glistening in the morning dew.

The garden seemed transcending fair,
With fragrant breezes ev'rywhere;
While ever and anon was heard
The piping sound of waking bird.

Whilst pacing rose-strewn walks around,
Rare, priceless spoils my labors crowned;
And lo! in rich profusion sweet,
Grew beds of heart's-ease at my feet.

I quickly stooped and plucked them all,
Then hastened at the breakfast call,
And by each plate of tardy guest
I laid an off'ring of the best.

Among the gay assemblage there,
Was one of talents, rich and rare,
Whose merry voice I loved to hear,
With laughter ringing loud and clear.

That morn he watched my blushing face,
And said, with his accustomed grace,—
"I kindly thank you, if you please,
For giving me this sweet heart's-ease."

And later on he seized my hand,
And placed thereon a golden band;
And in the setting brightly shone
A pansy with a diamond stone.

ROBIN REDBREAST.

PRETTY red robin from over the sea,
What are you singing so blithely to me?
Under the leaves of the apple-tree bough,
You've built a wee nest, I verily trow.

O wise robin redbreast, tell to me true,
Where have you your eggs so precious and blue?
And where is your mate—your wee little bride—
Who's guarding the nest with motherly pride?

Bright little robin, what melody floats
Thro' all of your merry, jubilant notes!
O'er hill-top and mountain, all the day long,
Blithesome and happy and pure is your song.

Tho' ofttimes sore-burdened, troubled and sad,
I've learned this great truth that maketh me glad,
Sweet robin redbreast from over the sea,—
God fashioned thee, and He careth for me.

TO OUR BOYS.

WHAT if your jacket be seedy and torn,
And what if your shoes be dingy and worn,
By doing the very best that you can
May make you, some day, a prosperous man.
And if your heart be but honest and true,
What can hard poverty matter to you?
The soul that's willing to plod and to toil,
May soon reap a rich and bountiful spoil.
Should hardship oppress, remember, my boy,
Sometime you may be the world's proudest joy.
The earnest of heart, the ready of hand,
'Tis they that succeed all over the land;
And he that but climbs from common-place things,
May reach quite as high as princes or kings.
Let your motives on honor and virtue be bent,
And you may of your country be made President.

THE SEA.

MYSTERIOUS sea,
Thy giant strength, thy thund'rous roar,
That thrill earth's pulses to the core,
Are God to me.

When day has flown,
And peace and beauty overhead,
Thy sand-paved shores I love to tread,
With thee alone.

My soul afire
With thy soul's grand, ecstatic rage,
Beats madly 'gainst its flesh-barred cage,
As 'twould mount higher.

LIFE.

THE aspirations born of youth, we all so fondly cherished,
Like ships upon the billows tossed, alas! have rudely perished.

In ev'ry hour of life there lurks some secret spring of sorrow;
Some unexpected trial comes with each returning morrow.

Yet, as the years go flitting by, we'll trust our all to Heaven,
Assured we'll reap the promised joy, that joy unmixed with leaven.

AT CLOSE OF DAY.

THE day is spent and the shadows
Are creeping stealthily on,
As the driven snow from Heaven
On the still night air is borne.

The gold and crimson horizon,
A glow on the mountain's crest,
Awakens an ardent longing
And yearning within my breast.

A burdened feeling of sadness,
That no other heart can tell,
Save that of the stricken mourner,
As she lists the Death Sprite's knell.

Come read me some simple poem,
That shall soothe this weary pain,
Or sing me a tender ballad,
With a low and sweet refrain.

Read not to me of the martyrs,
Who died at the burning stake,
Enduring their tortures rather
Than the Cross of the Lord forsake.

For that would add to my sorrow,
And their suff'ring but increase
The anguish within my bosom;
And to-night I long for peace.

At Close of Day.

But sing me some gentle measure,
  That I have not heard for years,
With a tenderness and pathos,
  That shall melt my heart to tears.

And thy voice in all its beauty,
  The power shall have to allay
The passion within my bosom,
  And banish the clouds away.

TWILIGHT.

GRAY shadows are creeping over the hills,
And kissing the dreamy canopied blue,
And my heart, forgetting life's weary ills,
Partakes of God's wonderful peace anew.

Nc fret from the planning and toil and care:
No harrowing woe is haunting my breast,
As I gaze on this heav'nly landscape fair,
So fraught with the twilight's beautiful rest.

And I reck not aught of the vanished days,
With their bitter mem'ries of grief and pain,
For to-night my bosom, in strange, deft ways,
Is filled with the gladness of youth again.

Not a sound on the slumb'rous air is heard,
As the phantom feet of the shadows glide,
Save the trembling notes of some hidden bird,
Or the silv'ry voice of the rippling tide.

And out of the hush of the twilight here,
As the curtain of night is falling dim,
Sweet echoes are borne to my list'ning ear
Of villagers chanting their vesper hymn.

As I gaze far out on the sheltered bay,
In the fiery glow of the amber West,
I dream of the loved who have passed away,
To that beautiful land of peaceful rest.

Twilight.

And I hope and trust that it may be so,
At the closing scene of my life's brief day,
That my spirit shall calmly, sweetly go
When the twilight shadows are falling gray.

THE CELESTIAL CITY.

I KNOW a celestial City,
Whose beautiful streets are of gold;
Where none of the Lord's dear children
E'er suffer from hunger or cold.

I've read the walls of that City
Are all garnished with precious stones;
And angel voices are chanting
Their praises in rapturous tones.

No night is within that City,
For all is radiant with love;
The glory of God it brightens,
And the Lamb is the light thereof.

There a River pure is flowing,
And its streams are placid and wide;
The Tree of Life, too, is growing
On the verdant banks by each side.

There's no death within that City,
Nor sickness, nor sorrow, nor pain;
No burdens are there to carry,
And no longings for earthly gain.

But ere you enter that City,
Whiter your robes must be than snow;
Yet whosoever believeth,
To that Haven of Rest shall go.

The Celestial City.

Would you journey to that City?
The Saviour will pilot you o'er;
And glad the Lord will you welcome,
And joy will be yours evermore.